DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 580 CG 022 836

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TITLE The New Age Movement: Fad or Menace?
SPONS AGENCY Pennsylvania Univ., Philadelphia. Graduate School of Education.
PUB DATE Jul 90
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Council of Psychologists (48th, Tokyo, Japan, July 14-18, 1990). Research also supported by the American Family Foundation.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; *Beliefs; *Mysticism; Philosophy
IDENTIFIERS *New Age Movement; *Occultism

ABSTRACT

This paper presents selected opinions held by a panel of specialists in cult behaviors about the New Age movement, emphasizing those positions about which there is most consensus. These specialists included advisory board members from the American Family Foundation (AFF),which has sponsored publications and workshops on Satanism and on the New Age, and fellows of the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), which stresses critical analysis of occult phenomena. These two panels of experts completed a Likert scale survey giving their responses to 340 items classified into 5 parts: (1) 65 New Age terms, assessing extent of acquaintance and relative harm or benefit of the term; (2) 82 statements, including new age philosophies and opinions about New Age, soliciting agreement or disagreement; (3) 14 criteria suggested as more or less characteristic of the New Age movement; (4) 12 statements to be rated for importance for scientific study of a New Age program; and (5) 67 statements describing a practice involving a child, teenager, or youth. Results of the survey suggest a consensus that New Age programs and philosophies, with their combination of Eastern mysticism, experimental approaches to psychotechnology, the emphasis on experience, the desire for transformation, and the profit motive combine to create a strong potential for developing cultist modes of relating, including brainwashing and psychological manipulation and coercion. (TE)

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The New Age Movement: Fad or Menace?

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Paper prepred for presentation at the International Council of Psychologists in Tokyo, Japan, July, 1990.

Running head: New Age

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New Age Movement: Fad or Menace?

In this paper we present selected opinions held by a group of specialists in cult behaviors about the New Age movement. We stress those opinions about which there is the most agreement. We inquire about defining characteristics of the New Age, recommended criteria for research on effectiveness,the relative harmfulness or benefit of practices and terms, and the acceptability of philosophies associated with the New Age. We hope that our rather broad guage approach will contribute to clear thinking about the New Age. For example, do experts agree on which practices and terms, if any, are dangerous,especially to children and youth? We hope that our research will encourage further studies.

The so-called New Age movement has spawned a mass of popular books and journals,courses and workshops, proponents and critics, and offbeat and unusual practices which seem to have a strong appeal around the world. The media including television, the popular press, movies, and bookstores frequently feature ghosts, satanism, astrology, crystals, etc.The New Age in allegedly espousing magic and mysticism has evident linkages to contemporary thought in religion,philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry. It has been said to offer to the public, especially to the gullible,easy answers to difficult problems. The distinctions between cult and occult are not always clear. The new religions,satanism, and the new age may have their roots in (far from new) Eastern mysticism, folk religion, and

ancient superstitions. Although the new religions have attracted the attention of serious scholars and have been the topic of numerous research efforts, we have found few attempts to evaluate tne New Age or to verify its claims. When we generated a list of over 1500 citations to cult and occult topics, only 7% concerned the New Age. Typically, these were critical analyses (Alexander,1987; Kurtz,1989;Langone, 1989'; Raschke,1989; Rosedale, 1989; Shore, 1989) from the perspective of theology, philosophy, social psychology, sociology, or law or clinical observations (Dubrow-Eichel,1988) It is noteworthy, however, that at least two scholarly journals, The Cultic Studies Journal and the Skeptical Inquirer, are hospitable to articles about the New Age.

In this study, which is part of a larger examination of the New Age, we asked panels with recognized expertise for their opinions on five major topics: (1) defining characteristics, (2) the important characteristics of research on effects, (3) the extent to which practices involving teenagers, children, and youth were harmful, (4) the extent to which terms associated with the occult and cultic were harmful, and (5) the degree to which statements culled from the New Age literature were endorsed or rejected. In this particular study our focus was primarily on identifying survey items for which consensus was evident. We were not interested in comparing groups.

We drew our panels of experts from two somewhat different groups--advisory board members of the American Family Foundation (AFF) and fellows of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the

Paranormal (CSICOP). Although emphasizing research and education about cults, AFF has also sponsored publications and workshops on Satanism and on the New Age. CSICOP, which stresses critical analysis of occult phenomena, views the New Age from a factual, scientific perspective.

We were also interested in comparing those items associated with New Age, Satanism, and cults about which the AFF and CSICOP panels agreed. We recognized that certain New Age programs might employ cultic techniques of persuasion and control and might apply occult practices (e.g. channeling). Furthermore, we realized that while secular cult experts distinguish New Age from Satanism, Christian fundamentalists often do not. Therefore, we generated a large and diverse item pool.

Method

Design

Since in this particular study we were most interested in identifying those opinions about New Age and associated phenomena which experts agreed upon, we adopted a descriptive design. We compared items on Likert scales, looking for consensus on the extreme positions. We modified the Delphi procedure in which specialists are asked to make

predictions. Although we used two somewhat different panels, we postponed systematic comparisons between them; instead we stressed agreement.

Panels

The primary panel included 20 board members of the American Family Foundation (AFF). AFF's mission is to encourage education and researchabout cults. Board members are selected on the basis of expertise and leadership. The AFF panel included 11 men and 9 women; their ages ranged from 38 to 72 with an average of 50; seven described themselves as Jewish, six Protestant, five Catholic and one had no religious preference. Four listed themselves as leaders of anti-cult organizations; two were editors of anti-cult periodicals; two were academics in major research universities who were recognized for their research on new religions; two were active as therapists and exit counselors; two were distinguished theologians; other participants included an engineer, a personnel director, and a veterinarian.

Of the 20 people on the AFF panel, 7 completed the survey a second time (AFF 2). Following Delphi procedure, this subset of the AFF panel were provided with the mean response on the first administration in order to encourage consensus and to identify stable items.

Eight fellows of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal comprised the third panel. CSICOP, which publishes the Skeptical Inquirer and sponsors an annual conference, attempts to evaluate critically claims of the paranormal such as ESP, psychics, and Transcendental Meditation. Seven CSICOP panelists were men and one a woman; they averaged 57 with a range from 34 to 81; six indicated no religious preference and two classified themselves as humanists. Of these well known intellectuals, two were professional writers, two scientists, plus an executive officer, philosopher, and fundraiser.

New Age Survey

The New Age Survey included 340 items, classified into five parts. Panelists were presented with:

(a) 65 terms and asked to indicate their extent of acquaintance on a five step Likert scale (5--very well acquainted to 1--not acquainted) and "the extent to which you think the term represents something beneficial or harmful." (5--very beneficial; 4--beneficial; 3--neutral/cannot say; 2--harmful; 1 very harmful).

(b) 82 statements, including New Age philosophies and opinions about New Age, and asked to "please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree." (5--strongly agree;

4--agree; 3--can not say; 2--disagree; 1--strongly disagree);

(c) 14 criteria which "have been suggested as defining the New Age....rate each." (5--very characteristic; 4--characteristic; 3--can not say; 2--not characteristic;1--not at all characteristic.)

(d) 12 statements to be rated for importance for "a scientific study of the effectiveness of a New Age program." (5--very important; 4--important; 3--can not say; 2--not important;1--not very important.)

(e) 67 statements describing "a practice involving a child, teenager or youth." (5--very beneficial;4--beneficial;3--neutral/can not say; 2--harmful; 1--very harmful.

The New Age Survey took about 60 minutes to complete. Comments were invited.

In developing the survey, we interviewed experts, invited groups of them to brainstorm in open discussion, reviewed New Age publications, scanned publishers' listings, and examined articles in the popular press as well as The Skeptical Inquirer and the Cult Observer, a bi-monthly magazine that reviews press accounts concerning cultic groups. We also drew on our

personal experiences. Verbatim statements of New Age philosophy were selected empirically from publications and advertisements which described themselves as New Age; that is, we made no assumptions as to what New Age beliefs were except to rely on public self-descriptions. To verify respondent cooperativeness and alertness we introduced a few trick items (e.g. Meta-analysis is a term from statistics) and duplications. We piloted the survey on three experts not associated with AFF and CSICOP. Finally, we construed the New Age Survey as an exploratory instrument and postponed consideration of its psychometric properties in the traditional sense, as will be further addresed in the section on analyses.

Procedure

With the cooperation and sponsorship of AFF we mailed an invitation to participate to 71 board members. "As a result of your standing as an e..pert on cults, as well as your active membership in the American Family Foundation, your considered opinion would be highly valuable to the outcome of this study." The 20 usable responses represented a 28% return. Respondents were also advised that the second questionnaire would be forthcoming "to obtain and refine group judgments." Approximately 6 months after the first administration, identical New Age Survey forms were distributed first at the annual AFF board meeting and then by mail to those not replying. Of 29 returns, 7 had participated in the first administration and were set aside for this analysis. (The 22 "new"

panelists were reserved for inclusion in other studies.) With the cooperation of the chairman of CSICOP (Dr. Paul Kurtz) 48 fellows were invited also by mail to participate "in a research project designed to measure knowledgeable opinions about the New Age Movement." The 8 usable replies (17%) comprised the CSICOP panel. Replies from a second mailing of CSICOP fellows and from proponents of the New Age have been set aside for possible subsequent analyses.

Analyses

In this exploratory study we were interested in the consensus of experts about items rather than in comparing subgroups or identifying correlates of respondent characteristics. In this case, then, we were determining the validity of opinion in terms of agreement about positions on Likert scales, and specifically agreement on extreme positions such as "very harmful" and "harmful." If the AFF panel and the CSICOP panel each yielded skewed means (4.00 or higher; 2.00 or lower) in the same direction, this would be further evidence of item validity. Therefore we calculated means on the 340 items for the two panels separately. We then identified in rank order by AFF mean within the five classifications the most strongly endorsed items.

Single items on surveys are notoriously unreliable by and large. We reasoned that if the AFF2 panelists agreed about the extreme for an item at least 71%, and preferably 100%, we could consider that the original AFF

mean was stable. Applying these criteria, we eliminated from the list of strongly endorsed items those about which AFF2 panelists disagreed. By inspection of the 165 terms we also eliminated any in which AFF panelists indicated in a majority of instances (11 or more) that they were slightly or moderately acquainted. Despite the admittedly small and unrepresentative nature of the panels, we argue that the five lists of items yielded by these procedures are reliable and meaningful. On the other hand we have less confidence in the items which did not survive these procedures. Nor can we justify comparisons among the three panels. However, with larger samples and more sophisticated analyses we hope eventually to compare AFF with CSICOP as well as with proponents of the New Age.

Results and Discussion

New Age Characterized

We identified six statements (Table 1) as characterizing the New Age: " an eclectic collection of psychological and spiritual techniques;" "inadequate scientific data regarding effectiveness;" "create zealous promotors;" "rooted in eastern mysticism;" "idealization of a leader who claims founding transformative vision;" and "contradict my beliefs." In addition,

the statement, "psychological manipulation and coercion" almost met our criteria for inclusion. We note that these characteristics are shared with many cults and are therefore consistent with AFF's concerns about the New Age.

Scientific study

Of nine statements four (Table 2) were considered by the panels as important for a scientific study of the effectiveness of a New Age program: "Peer review;" "source of funding;" "used control group;" and "behavioral measures." Rigorous well designed objective studies of New Age practices are scarce and certainly needed.

Harmful practices

Of 67 practices, 30 were rated (Table 3) as harmful or very harmful to children, teenagers, or youth. The 10 most harmful practices with ratings of 1.00 to 1.21 were: "Teenagers join Satanist group and make a murder suicide pact;" "woman operates day care center which participates in ritual sexual abuse;" "minister persuades children to have sex 'to remain in God's good grace and build your demon fighting powers;" "a teen ager is brain washed by the Creative Community project;" "after a period of prayer, meditation, and fasting, a high school freshman sacrificed a goat at the command of his Satanic guru;" "army draftee is ordered to take a personal improvement course offered by the Church of Scientology;"

"teenager sacrifices rats during a mystic ceremony led by a witch;" "woman claims her son joined Temple of Brotherhood of the Ram and threatened to kill her;" 'Satanists stage an aggresive recruitment drive in area schools;" and "a college sophomore drops out to live near a 40 year old woman who claims contact with a 35,000 year old wiseman." (Note that the "brainwashing" item was presented twice as a rough check on response consistency.)

On inspection, the first three practices are clearly violations of law; other practices evidently are bizarre, but some which appear innocuous were rated harmful by panelists with specialized knowedge. For example, courses which purport to improve concentration, raise grades, and enhance personality often involve psychological manipulation. Incidentally, academics, theologians, and legal authorities differ as to whether or not brainwashing exists and is harmful. The AFF panels' rating of brainwashing in this study was supported by the scientific skeptics. The most harmful practices were associated with Satanism and cults.

Terms Rated Harmful

Table 4 presents the 26 terms which were rated by the AFF panel from 1.00 to 2.42 on a harmful/beneficial Likert scale. Of the 165 terms presented, the 10 rated most harmful were: "Scientology;" " Dianetics;" "CARP;" "cult;" "est;" " Ramtha;" "lifespring;" "TM;" "CUT" and "the Forum." Thus the list includes terms associated with four religious cults and two

personal growth programs. "Cult"(1.50) outranked "occult" (1.82) and "New Age" (2.05). On the other hand, a number of terms selected from New Age publications (Natural healing'" "rebirthing," "channeling," "levitation," "palmistry," "crystals," "astral projection," and "spiritualism") made the top 26 group.

The panelists were not well acquainted or only mildly acquainted with many of the terms which we had culled from New Age publications. It should be mentioned briefly here that the AFF experts differed both in acquaintance and harmful/beneficial ratings on many terms from the CSICOP fellows. We were impressed in our review of New Age publications with the very large number of terms, many of which are largely unknown except to proponents and devotees. Variety and complexity also appear to characterize the New Age. (These characteristics account for the length of our survey.)

Among the terms presented to the panels were 20 "New Age groups as a random sampling" identified by Eddie Noonan and published in the U.K. Of these 12 received an acquaintance rating below 2.00, suggesting that a substantial proportion of New Age groups are local in character. (The inclusion of Unitarians on Noonan's list--rated 3.11 on acquaintance and 3.31, on the beneficial end of the scale--raised the ire of three panelists who belonged to this denomination!).

Opinions and Beliefs

Of 82 statements which the panelists rated on a 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement) Likert scale 30 are presented in Table 5 as most accepted or rejected. These statements included expressions of New Age philosophies and opinions about the New Age. Three statements were rated 4.50 or above (strong agreement): "Channeling is a fraud;" "New Age techniques, when mandated for all employees, are an invasion of privacy;" and "most New Age concepts are not supported by scientific evidence."

Eight statements were rated 1.50 or above (strong disagreement): "Once you realize that you are God, you understand all;" "spiritually advanced people succeed at everything they attempt;" "because man is a deity and can do no wrong, there is no sin, no reason for guilt;" "if people really understood the New Age, they would become part of it;" "mankind is at the threshold of a great evolutionary leap of consciousness transformation guided by an omnipotent energy or force that will lead to a peaceful, happy, united new world;" "channeling is a skill that can be used by anyone who wants to connect with universal needs, higher self, or spirit guide;" "the purpose of life is to realize that one is God;" and "there is an energy or force in the universe that will lead to a happy, peaceful new world. "Recalling that the AFF panel was comprised proportionately of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants and included several who were employed by various denominations, we hypothesize that the New Age philosophies may have been offensive to those with traditional theological beliefs. Nor, by and large, were these philosophies acceptable to the scientific skeptics.

Concluding Comments

The results of this survey suggest that a number of comments may be made with confidence about the consensus of American Family Foundation board members in respect to the New Age. They defined New Age as an eclecic collection of psychological and spiritual techniques rooted in Eastern mysticism. Although less dangerous than Satanism and religious and self-improvement cults, New Age programs were considered similar in their dependence on idealized leaders and use of psychological manipulation. Practices associated with cults and especially with Satanism were rated harmful to children and youth. The New Age was not viewed as a passing fad and its philosophies were offensive. Along with Scientology, the Church Universal and Triumpant, est, and lifespring--channeling, astral projection, levitation, crystals, and rebirthing were considered harmful. Courses which purport to improve grades, concentration, or personality or to use psychotecnnology for personal growth were rated more harmful than beneficial.

Were the panelists qualified to evaluate the New Age? AFF board members, selected for expertise and leadership in cult matters, rated themselves well acquainted with the New Age (4.11 on a 5 point scale). Several had written books and articles (e.g. Raschke,1989; Rosedale, 1989) and presented at professional meetings on the New Age. They were,

incidentally, traditionals in religious preference. Unlike the skeptics, they could hardly be accused of bias against all religions; rather, their responses to the survey suggested they were attempting to sort out harmful from beneficial practices. If Unitarians were acceptable, CARP (Collegiate Association for Research of Principle) advocates were not.

Is the charge of brainwashing unfounded? Whether presented as "brainwashing" or the more sophisticated "psychological manipulation and coercion" both AFF and skeptical panels rated such behavior very harmful. However, our data do not fully support the conclusion that brainwashing is an integral feature, or even a commonly observed feature, of the New Age. In contrast, two of us (Dole and Dubrow-Eichel, 1988) have reported that AFF panelists consider brainwashing a major destructive characteristic of some new religions. On the other hand, our AFF and CSICOP panelists agreed that "in the New Age movement the combination of eastern mysticism, experimental approaches to psychotechnology, the emphasis on experience, the desire for transformation, and the profit motivation combine to create a strong potential for the development of cultic modes of relating."

Table 1
Items Rated Very Characteristic or Characteristic of New Age by AFF Panels, Plus CSICOP Mean

	AFF M	AFF %	CSICOP M
1. Eclectic collection of psychological and spiritual techniques.	4.55	100	4.35
2. Inadequate scientific data regarding effectiveness.	4.38	100	4.00
3. Create zealous promoters.	4.22	100	3.71
4. Rooted in eastern mysticism.	4.11	100	4.00
5. Idealization of a leader who claims founding,transformative vision.	4.11	71	3.66
6. Contradict my beliefs.	4.05	100	4.00
7. Psychological manipulation and coercion.	3.94	86	4.28

Note.
Fourteen items were rated on the following scale: 5--very characteristic; 4--characteristic; 3--can not say; 2--not characteristic; 1--not at all characteristic. Items exceeding a mean of 3.90 for AFF panel are presented above in rank order.

Interpretation of columns.
AFF=American Family Foundation panel (n=20) M=Mean; AFF2=American Family Foundation repeat panel (n=7)%=percentage rating item characteristic or very characteristic; CSICOP=Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal panel (n=8) M=Mean.

Table 2
Items Rated Very Important or Important for a Scientific Study of the Effectiveness of a New Age Program by AFF Panels, Plus CSICOP Mean

	AFF M	AFF2 %	CSICOP M
1. Peer review.	4.35	100	4.62
2. Source of funding.	4.11	71	4.37
3. Used control group.	4.06	100	4.25
4. Behavioral measures.	4.00	100	3.83

Note. Nine items were rated on the following scale: 5--very important; 4--important; 3--can not say; 2--not important; 1--not very important. Items with an AFF mean of 4.00 or above and AFF2 % exceeding 70% are presented above in rank order.

Table 3
Practices Involving a Child, Teenager, or Youth Rated Harmful or Very Harmful by AFF Panels, Plus Mean Rating of CSICOP Panel

	AFF M	AFF2 %	CSICOP M
1.Teenagers join Satanist group and make a murder suicide pact.	1.00	100	1.12
2.Woman operates day care center which participates in ritual sexual abuse.	1.00	100	1.00
3.Minister persuades children to have sex "to remain in God's good grace and build your demon fighting powers."	1.00	100	1.25
4. A teen ager is brain washed by the Creative Community project.	1.05	100	1.12
5.After a period of prayer, meditation ,and fasting a high school freshman sacrificed a goat at the command of his Satanic group.	1.05	100	1.25
6.Army draftee is ordered to take a personal improvement course offered by the Church of Scientology.	1.05	100	1.02
7.Teenager sacrifices rats during a mystic ceremony led by a witch.	1.08	100	1.25
8.Woman claims her son joined Temple of Brotherhood of the Ram and threatened to kill her.	1.15	100	1.13
9.Satanists stage an aggresive recruitment drive in area schools.	1.21	100	1.00
10.A teen ager is brain washed by the Creative Community Project.	1.21	100	1.75
11.A college sophomore drops out to live near a 40 year old woman who claims contact with a 35,000 year old wiseman.	1.22	100	1.37
12.Parents find D & D,occultic manuals,and an occult curio catalog in room of sons,ages 12 and 16.	1.31	100	2.40

13. Transcendental Meditation offers a non-credit course which includes chanting, meditation, and levitation "to improve your grades."	1.42	71	1.75
14. Foster son, 16, spends three hours every day playing Demons and Dragons.	1.57	100	2.50
15. Woman invites college students to attend her group where she promises to channel ascended masters.	1.57	100	2.12
16. A high school group watches a rented video tape about a South American entity, Mafu. Mafu sends messages through his channeler, (Mrs. R.) such as "love yourself. You are God."	1.61	100	1.62
17. A community college student regularly consults a psychic, Joan, whose fee is $20. She guides and advises him through past life regression, hypnosis, predictions, and warnings.	1.66	100	1.25
18. High school English teacher introduces self-hypnotic procedures in her classes to increase pupils' concentration.	1.66	100	2.00
19. A prospective applicant to the University of California accepts an invitation from a campus group to spend a free week end workshop at their farm in the country where they will study how to end hunger in America.	66	85	3.28
20. A professor of philosophy, a specialist in India, praises Hare Krishna in his classes.	1.77	100	2.42
21. Social worker uses Tarot reading to reach 15 year old truants as part of an accredited high school drop out program.	1.78	85	1.87
22. Jehovah's Witnesses stage an aggressive recruitment drive in area schools.	1.78	85	1.37
23. High school social studies instructor offers course on Global Mind Change. He asserts, "Leading scientific thought now recognizes that along with objective data, our subjective religious and spiritual insights are also a valid description of reality."	1.83	85	1.62
24. Wizard curses straight A student.	1.89	71	2.25
25. A camp for girls advertises, "In our new camp program we represent a return to the ancient spiritual wisdom about the true identity and power of the individual. In our prog-			

rams we aim to empower the children so they can get in touch with their creative sources, and then apply that potential to every part of their lives, including their school life."	1.88	100	2.50
26. A teenager spends her allowance to buy subliminal message tapes: How to use your mind to do anything you choose.	1.94	100	2.14
27. Fifteen year old prefers fantasy world of elves and dwarfs.	1.94	100	2.50
28. Annie, age 14, blind since 8, claims she was cured by mother's psychic friends and Mariel Treatments.	1.94	85	1.50
29. Freshmen register for college course--Human potential--offered by the religious studies department. Topics include: Unlock your latent abilities, frontiers of human consciousness,creativity, the unconscious,paradigm shifts, morphogenetic fields,lucid dreaming,and global peace.	2.00	71	1.71
30. Teachers and parents assist children in using extrasensory perception creatively.	2.00	100	1.37

Practices Rated Beneficial or Very Beneficial

1. Teenager attends neighbourhood Christian church each Sunday.	3.73	86	3.12
2. Civil Liberties Union defends right of high school group to stage a Peace Rally on athletic field.	3.68	100	4.62
3. Neighbourhood pastor holds Bible classes for youth.	3.52	100	2.62
4. High school chemistry teacher tells his students that reincarnation is bunk.	3.36	71	4.37

Note.
Sixty seven items were rated on the following scale: 5--very beneficial; 4--beneficial; 3--neutral, can not say; 2--harmful; 1--very harmful. Items with an AFF mean of 2.00 or below and 3.30 or above and AFF2 % exceeding 70 are presented above in rank order.

Table 4
Terms Rated Most Harmful/Beneficial by AFF Panels, Plus Mean Rating by CSICOP Panel

	AFF M	AFF2 %	CSICOP M
I Harmful or Very Harmful			
1.Scientology	1.10	100	1.25
2.[b] Dianetics	1.10	100	1.29
3.CARP	1.50	100	3.00[a]
4.Cult	1.50	100	1.16
5.Est	1.55	100	1.60
6.Ramtha	1.55	100	1.50
7.Lifespring	1.55	100	2.33[a]
8. TM	1.57	100	2.16
9.[b] Dianetics	1.58	100	1.42
10. CUT	1.63	100	3.00[a]
11. Forum	1.68	100	2.00[a]
12. Hunger project	1.72	100	1.75
13. Occult	1.82	100	1.28
14. Natural healing	1.88	100	1.60
15.[b] Rebirthing	1.88	80	2.66
16. Channeling	2.00	100	1.25
17. Levitation	2.00	100	1.28
18. Silva mind control	2.00	100	2.60[a]
19. New age	2.05	100	1.40
20. Christian Science	2.10	86	1.14
21. Palmistry	2.11	83	1.28
22. Crystals	2.15	86	1.50
23. Astral projection	2.16	100	1.25
24.[b] Rebirthing	2.21	100	2.25
25. Spiritualism	2.25	86	1.42
26.Fundamentalism	2.42	86	1.26

II Beneficial or Very Beneficial

1. CAN	4.55	100	3.00[a]
2. Judaism	4.31	100	3.62
3. Psychology	4.15	100	3.88
4. Neurology	4.15	80	4.83
5. Protestantism	4.15	86	3.37
6. Consciousness	4.00	100	4.66
7. Catholicism	3.90	86	2.75
8. Psychoanalysis	3.77	100	3.16
9. Psychiatry	3.73	100	4.00
10. Pacifism	3.72	83	4.28
11. Biofeedback	3.55	86	3.00

Note.
One hundred sixty five terms were rated on the following scales: Extent of acquaintance=5--very well acquainted; 4--well acquainted; 3--moderately acquainted; 2--slightly acquainted; 1--not acquainted. Extent beneficial /harmful=5--very; beneficial; 4--beneficial; 3--neutral, can not say; 2--harmful; 1--very harmful. Items with an AFF mean of 2.42 or below or 3.55 or higher and AFF 2 % of at least 80 are presented above.

a--A majority of this panel indicated they were slightly or not acquainted with this term.

b--This term was presented twice.

Table 5

New Age Philosophies and Opinions About New Age Rated by AFF Panels Plus Mean Rating by CSICOP Panel

	AFF M	AFF2 %	CSICOP M
I Statements Rated Agree or Strongly Agree			
1. Channeling is a fraud.	4.66	100	4.50
2. New age techniques when mandated for all employees are an invasion of privacy.	4.65	100	4.71
3. Most New Age concepts are not supported by scientific evidence.	4.50	85	4.87
4. While spiritual growth is important, public schools should not prescribe the methods whereby children grow spiritually.	4.44	100	4.25
5. Programs like the Forum for business executives are a rip-off.	4.36	100	3.82
6. In the New Age movement the combination of eastern mysticism, experimental approaches to psychotechnology,the emphasis on experience, the desire for transformation,and the profit motivation combine to create a strong potential for the development of cultic modes of relating.	4.29	100	4.28
7. The New Age is dangerous.	4.22	88	4.12
8. Thinking that one is God is spiritual arrogance.	4.12	100	3.71
9. Thinking that one is God is a narcissistic delusion.	4.00	100	4.12
II Statements Rated Disagree or Strongly Disagree			
1. Once you realize that you are God, you understand all.	1.23	100	1.62
2. Spiritually advanced people succeed at everything they attempt.	1.31	100	1.14
3. Because man is a deity and can do no wrong,there is no sin, no reason for guilt.	1.38	100	1.14
4. If people really understood the New Age they would become part of it.	1.38	100	1.28
5. Mankind is at the threshold of a great evolutionary leap of consciousness transformation guided by an omnipotent			

energy or force that will lead to a peaceful,happy, united new world.	1.44	100	1.00
6. Channeling is a skill that can be used by anyone who wants to connect with universal needs, higher self,or spirit guide.	1.47	100	1.28
7. The purpose of life is to realize that one is God.	1.47	100	1.71
8. There is an energy or force in the universe that will lead to a happy,peaceful new world.	1.47	86	1.12
9. People are totally responsible for everything that has happened to them.	1.52	86	2.00
10. Mankind is at the threshold of a great evolutionary leap of consciousness to new beliefs.	1.55	100	1.62
11. Morality is a matter of personal preference.	1.57	100	1.71
12. The New Age is a harmless fad.	1.63	100	1.50
13. Failure can be avoided if one understands life properly.	1.68	100	1.57
14. The pledge of allegiance in school is a form of guided imagery.	1.70	86	3.33
15. The effectiveness of an action depends solely on the person evaluating it.	1.72	100	1.57
16. Newly discovered psychospiritual exercises can make a person spiritually advanced.	1.77	100	1.14
17. If everyone had his consciousness raised,the world would be at peace.	1.88	100	1.28
18. Prayer (or a period of meditation) should be mandated in the public schools.	1.88	100	1.25
19. Through an understanding of the Chakras, the psychic centers within the cerebro-spinal system,one can harmonize the two hemisphers of the brain.	1.94	83	1.57
20. Before making a major decision,world leaders should consult a qualified astrologer.	1.94	100	1.00
21. The American Civil Liberties Union is perfectly justified in defending the rights of cultists and occultists, however misguided they may be, as a matter of freedom of religion and speech.	2.00	71	4.14

Note.
Eighty two statements were rated on the following scale: 5--strongly agree; 4--agree; 3--neutral, can not say; 2--disagree; 1--strongly disagree. Statements with an AFF mean of 4.00 or more or 2.00 or less and an AFF2 % of 80 or more are presented above.

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Note.
This research was supported by the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, and by the American Family Foundation. George Woodruff was research assistant.